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# Bangalore Mirror

TEMP Max 34 | Min 23 | Humidity 39% Partly sunny Sensex 74,559 | Nifty 23,379 | Gold 1,53,235 | Silver 2,76,950 | Dollar 95.76 | Euro 112.23 | GBP 129.49

## JOY RIDE

Unique free cycling training initiative has empowered people from the age of 5 to 70 years over past one year

PAGE 2

## GONE GREEN

Between 2019 & 2024, parts of city and its outskirts lost big chunk of forest cover, map based on satellite imagery shows

PAGE 5

**B'luru records 109 cases of stalking despite most of the cases going unreported with police, society labelling it as harmless 'one-sided love' and families hesitating to file complaints fearing punishing process**

# JEEPERS CREEPERS

## Authorities often take these cases seriously only after lethal escalation

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Despite concerns around women's safety and conversations around harassment in public spaces, Karnataka reported a total of 304 stalking cases in 2024, according to the latest data released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) while Bengaluru alone recorded a total of 109 cases of stalking and 20 cases of voyeurism.

Under Section 78 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (previously Section 354D of the Indian Penal Code), stalking includes repeatedly following a woman, contacting her despite disinterest, or monitoring her activity in a manner that causes fear or distress.

A 27-year-old Bengaluru woman, who requested anonymity, said she chose not to file a police complaint after being repeatedly followed by a man near her workplace for several months.

"At first, I thought maybe I was overreacting because people around me said he was only trying to talk to me," she said. "But he began waiting outside my office, following me to the bus stop and messaging me constantly from different numbers. I stopped taking the same route home because I was scared."

She said when she eventually informed her family, they discouraged her from approaching the police.

"They felt it would become a bigger issue and that I would be blamed or questioned repeatedly. I was told to ignore it and avoid going out alone," she said.

Another college student from Mysuru said stalking complaints are often trivialised, especially when the accused is known to the victim.

> **"Stalking takes place in public spaces and the perpetrator is aware of the consequences. Despite this, the matter is dismissed as a behavioural issue, instead of strictly being called out as a criminal act by the police**
>
> —Manu Chowdhry, lawyer, Gamana Women's Collective

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 »

# Wanted: Lab instruments

## Several state pollution control board laboratories running without vital equipment; 11 mandatory ones missing in Bengaluru

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Many Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) laboratories are running without vital instruments and equipment to measure pollution.

These include instruments and equipment for sampling water, wastewater, soil, and hazardous waste; equipment for sampling ambient air and source emission monitoring; equipment required for processing environmental samples; and analytical instruments in environmental laboratories.

Across its four laboratories in Bengaluru, Davangere, Hassan, and Mysuru, a total of 592 instruments and pieces of equipment are required. However, only 383 pieces of equipment are available, leaving a gap of 209. Out of the total 209 unavailable instruments and equipment across all four laboratories, 131 are mandatory equipment.

While the laboratory in Bengaluru does not have 11 mandatory equipment, the Davangere lab has 14 mandatory equipment or instruments missing, the Hassan lab does not have 39 mandatory equipment, and the Mysuru lab has a gap of 67 mandatory instruments and equipments.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6 »

## THINGS TO DO

### 01 Creative storytelling

Bhoomija presents Saavirada Sharanavva, Stories and Songs, a deeply personal performance by one of India's most revered theatre practitioners, B Jayashree — weaving together memory, music and the magic of the stage. **Where: Prestige Centre for Performing Arts, Konanakunte; When: May 16, 6.30 pm**

### 02 Deal delights

Daysie RR Nagar celebrates its 2nd anniversary with 'Sakkath Nights, Sakkath Prices', a week-long celebration bringing together value-driven offers and a line-up of Kannada music-led experiences. **Where: Daysie, RR Nagar; When: Until May 17, 12 pm onwards**

### 03 Cadence in candlelight

Candlelight® by Live Your City returns to Bengaluru this season, offering audiences intimate evenings where thousands of glowing candles transform venues into immersive settings for unforgettable live music experiences. **Where: Alliance Française de Bangalore; When: May 17, 4.30 pm, 6.30 pm, 8.30 pm**

### 04 Tales of nature

ALT EFF Film Club is presenting a lineup of 4 short films, each bringing its own flavour of environmental storytelling, followed by ALT EFF Voices, an open mic where audience members share short, personal, environment-related stories. **Where: Atta Galatta, Indiranagar; When: May 15, 7 pm**

### 05 Mood for music

Rudraksha Live Entertainment Pvt Ltd presents Jazbaa, a concert featuring Vishal and Rekha Bhardwaj — a powerhouse duo in Indian music and cinema, known for their deeply moving collaborations and individual brilliance. **Where: Phoenix Marketcity; When: May 30, 7 pm**

# Age no bar in this fit and fine cycling group

## Initiative unites individuals from diverse age groups and different walks of life to learn cycling in safe and supportive environment, encouraging eco-friendly transportation and fitness

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In a community-driven movement promoting fitness, sustainability and confidence, a unique free cycling training initiative in Malleshwaram is transforming lives across generations. Initiated by Malleshwara Cyclists and Fitness Club, in association with Malleshwaram Swabhimana Initiative Forum (MSIF), the initiative has successfully trained participants ranging in age from 5 to 70 over the past year. What began as a small neighbourhood effort has now evolved into a social movement bringing together citizens of all age groups. Every week, children, students, working professionals, homemakers and senior citizens gather with enthusiasm to learn cycling in a safe, supportive and encouraging environment.

The initiative by Yashhaswini, who leads the free cycle training programme through the Malleshwara Cyclists, focuses not only on teaching cycling but also on promoting eco-friendly transportation, physical fitness, self-confidence and mental well-being. "We are two trainers, me and another trainer, Suraj, who cycle from Banashankari to Malleshwaram just to reach the participants. We patiently guide beginners through balancing techniques, road safety awareness and confidence-building exercises, ensuring that every learner feels comfortable irrespective of age," she said.

Small neighbourhood effort has now evolved into social movement bringing together children, youth and seniors alike to learn cycling

The participation of adults and senior citizens who never had the opportunity to learn cycling during their younger years has become one of the most inspiring aspects of the programme. Many participants who initially joined with hesitation are now confidently riding on their own. For children, the sessions have become a healthy outdoor activity that encourages discipline, coordination and an active lifestyle away from screens.

Vidya Shanbhag, a senior citizen, said, "After taking up cycling, my blood sugar levels have come under control and I feel healthier, more active and confident. Age is never a barrier to start something that improves your life. I had a childhood dream back then to learn cycling but that couldn't happen due to family restrictions. But now years later I'm able to do it. Age is not a limit. I dedicate my 2 hours every weekend to practising and learning cycling."

An avid cyclist pointed out that such initiatives should be broadly welcomed. "Cycling offers several physical and mental health benefits for both children and senior citizens. For kids, it helps improve balance, coordination, fitness and confidence while encouraging outdoor activity and reducing screen time. For senior citizens, cycling supports joint mobility, heart health and mental well-being, while also helping reduce stress and isolation through social interaction. As a low-impact exercise, cycling is an accessible and enjoyable activity that promotes healthier lifestyles across all age groups." Before launching the initiative, Yashhaswini organised a cycle donation drive, collecting bicycles in good condition from people who no longer used them. Once the cycles were received, the team set the initiative in motion.

"Cycling can play a significant role in reducing traffic congestion, pollution and fuel dependency for short-distance travel within the city. Through this initiative, we hope to inspire every community in Bengaluru to make cycling a part of everyday life. Encouraged by the

**Encouraged by overwhelming response received, organisers are now looking to collaborate with NGOs, community groups, educational institutions and citizen forums to expand free cycling initiative across city**

overwhelming response received over the past year, the organisers are now looking to collaborate with NGOs, community groups, educational institutions and citizen forums to expand this free cycling initiative across Bengaluru. Our vision is to create accessible cycling learning centres in multiple neighbourhoods so that people across the city can benefit from this initiative irrespective of age or background," she added.

The group is also seeking cycle donations, volunteers and collaborations to expand the initiative and help more people experience the joy and freedom of cycling.

## India's first alcohol-content based liquor taxation now in Karnataka

The excise department has officially rolled out India's first liquor taxation system based on alcohol content, as announced by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah in the state budget. The new 'Alcohol in Beverages' tax structure came into effect on Monday, making low-cost liquor brands commonly consumed by workers significantly more expensive, while prices of some premium liquor brands have slightly decreased. The state had earlier followed a bulk-litre based taxation model. Under the newly implemented system, similar to taxation practices followed in several foreign countries, liquor is now taxed according to its alcohol percentage. As a result, prices of cheaper liquor brands have risen by 15 per cent to 25 per cent, a move expected to increase excise revenue for the state. For a 180 ml bottle, a few brands have become costlier by Rs 30. Old Monk Rum prices have increased by Rs 20. **— BMB**

## Salary hike for transport corporation employees gets nod from government

The Government of K'taka has approved a revised salary structure for employees and officers of the state's four major road transport corporations, including the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC), Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC), North West Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (NWKRTC) and Kalyana Karnataka Road Transport Corporation (KKRTC). According to the government order dated May 12, 2026, issued under Section 34(1) of the Road Transport Corporations Act, 1950, the basic pay of employees as on March 31, 2025, will be increased by 12.5 per cent. The revised pay structure, with higher pay and selection grade scales, takes effect from April 1, 2025, and applies to salaries from July 1, 2026. The arrears for April 2025–June 2026 will be cleared in phases. **— BMB**

## LPG price hike hits auto drivers, passengers feel the pinch

Auto drivers are reeling under the latest LPG price hike, with many alleging that the increase has become a fresh burden on an already struggling sector. The recent fuel shortage, triggered by the ongoing war situation, forced drivers to spend hours in queues outside fuel stations, eating into their daily earnings. Adding to the pressure, the Centre has now increased LPG prices by Rs 5.73 per litre, taking the current rate to Rs 95.24 per litre, while some private bunks are reportedly charging up to Rs 120 per litre with no uniform pricing. Complaints have also surfaced about some drivers illegally charging passengers extra fares to offset rising fuel costs.

Auto unions have urged the state government to revise fares, warning that the existing rates are no longer viable. At present, the minimum fare for the first two kilometres is Rs 36, with Rs 18 charged for every additional kilometre. Driver associations are demanding that the base fare be increased to Rs 50 and the per-kilometre charge to Rs 25. Drivers say meeting household expenses, children's education costs, rent, vehicle maintenance, EMIs and daily living expenses has become increasingly difficult. "Prices of essential commodities are already soaring. Now LPG shortage and price hikes have made survival tougher," said an auto driver, urging the Centre to reduce fuel prices immediately. Another driver said nearly 90,000 of the city's 2.6 lakh autos run on LPG and claimed that only a 12-hour workday now ensures minimum earnings. **— BMB**

## Forest heroes finally get justice, rewards ordered

The Karnataka High Court has directed the state government to reconsider and release long-pending rewards to forest department personnel who were part of the Special Task Force (STF) involved in the operation to track and neutralise forest brigand Veerappan in 2004.

Justice Sachin Shankar Magadum held that forest officials who participated in the anti-Veerappan operations could not be denied rewards when police personnel attached to the STF had already received similar benefits. The court observed that excluding forest staff from the reward scheme amounted to discrimination and violated equal treatment principles.

The petitions were filed by 72 forest department personnel, including retired guards, watchers, drivers and officers, who claimed they actively assisted STF operations for several years but were denied incentives promised by the government in 2005. The state had restricted the rewards to personnel present during the final operation in which Veerappan was killed.

The High Court rejected this reasoning, noting that the anti-Veerappan operation involved years of intelligence gathering, risk-taking and fieldwork. The court observed that the state could not selectively recognise a few officers while ignoring others who served in dangerous forest operations.

Under the 2005 government order, personnel who served in the STF for over three years were eligible for cash rewards of up to Rs 3 lakh and residential sites. The court directed the government to process and sanction the withheld rewards within 12 weeks. —BMB

IN HIGH COURT

## Victim compensation denied after contradictory trial testimony

The Karnataka High Court has ruled that victims who do not support the prosecution during trial proceedings cannot claim compensation under the state's victim compensation scheme in criminal cases. Justice V Srishananda passed the order while hearing a petition filed by the Karnataka State Legal Services Authority (KSLSA), which challenged a trial court's decision directing payment of Rs 3 lakh compensation to a woman in a rape case.

The High Court noted that the accused had secured acquittal after the complainant gave contradictory statements during the trial and failed to support the prosecution's case. In such circumstances, the court held that authorities could not grant compensation under the victim compensation scheme.

The bench observed that authorities responsible for recommending compensation must independently examine the facts of every case instead of mechanically approving requests. It stressed that District Legal Services Authorities should carefully scrutinise records before forwarding recommendations for compensation.

The court also referred to circulars issued by the KSLSA directing authorities to thoroughly verify cases before sanctioning compensation. However, in the present case, the recommendation was made without properly considering inconsistencies in the complainant's testimony, the court observed.

The case originated in Tumakuru district under Huliyaru police station limits. —BMB

# BM Education

## NEET cancellation sparks anger, relief nationwide

The National Testing Agency's (NTA) decision to cancel the NEET-UG 2026 exam held on May 3 following reports of alleged irregularities triggered mixed reactions across the city. A section of aspirants welcomed the move while also condemning the recurring failures in the examination system. A few students said the cancellation was "fair for honest candidates," arguing that continuing with a compromised exam would have been unjust to those who prepared sincerely. However, several aspirants also criticised the administration, calling repeated paper leak concerns a "system failure" that disrupts years of preparation and causes severe mental stress. They questioned why such incidents continue to occur in a national-level exam.

Voices from education bodies and political groups also criticised the situation, calling it a serious lapse in governance and examination security. D Shashi Kumar termed ut injustice, NSUI questioned NTA credibility, while authorities planned NEET reconduct soon. —BMB

## Online classes called 'Injustice' to students

Reacting to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's suggestion on going for online classes, D Shashi Kumar, General Secretary of the Associated Managements of Primary and Secondary Schools in Karnataka, criticised the prolonged use of online education, referring to the online classes conducted during the Covid-19 period. He termed the 500 days of online schooling during Covid as "shocking" and an "injustice" to students, arguing that school education cannot function effectively without physical classrooms. He said online learning may suit higher education, but it is "unscientific and not feasible" for school students, where in-person interaction is essential for brain development and behavioural learning. Shashi Kumar said prolonged online classes still affect student behaviour and insisted school education must always remain strictly physical. —BMB

## Offline coaching plan for PU aspirants

The Department of Pre-University Education is planning a major overhaul of its free coaching programme for CET, NEET and JEE aspirants studying in government and aided PU colleges by shifting from online to offline classes starting next academic year. The department has submitted a proposal to the state government aiming to make coaching more effective through classroom-based learning within colleges.

Under the proposed model, PU lecturers will receive specialised training and conduct coaching sessions for students preparing for competitive exams. A hybrid model is also under consideration for colleges with fewer science students, though officials are yet to take a final decision on its implementation.

The free coaching scheme, launched in November 2024, earlier relied on online classes conducted by a Mumbai-based private coaching agency selected through a tender process. —BMB

## KPSC pushes digital reform for transparency

The Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC), which is constitutionally responsible for selecting efficient officers for the state administration, is moving towards major reforms aimed at improving transparency and restoring public trust. Facing criticism and credibility concerns over the years, the commission now plans to minimise human intervention in post-exam procedures by introducing technology-driven systems.

A key focus is the digitisation of document verification, replacing the existing physical scrutiny process with digital authentication to ensure greater transparency and efficiency. KPSC Secretary K Jyothi said the commission is working on multiple reforms, including the use of technology to eliminate the scope for interference in recruitment procedures. Digital verification via Digilocker aims to speed recruitment, prevent fake documents, reduce delays and improve transparency in KPSC hiring. —BMB

## VTU issues UG, PG exam dates

Visvesvaraya Technological University has released the examination schedule for undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The exams will begin in the second week of June and conclude in the third week of August. Separate timetables have been prepared for students under the new and old curricula. VTU has directed principals of affiliated colleges to display the examination schedule on college notice boards to ensure students are informed. Students can check further details on the official VTU website, according to a press release issued by the university. —BMB

## AI to evaluate Karnataka board papers soon

The Karnataka School Education and Literacy Department is considering using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to evaluate SSLC and II PUC answer scripts starting next academic year, following the introduction of digital evaluation for CBSE Class 12 papers. IIT Dharwad, which is already developing an AI curriculum for students from Classes 8 to 12, is expected to partner with the department on this initiative.

Under the proposed system, teachers will scan or photograph answer sheets and upload them to a portal, where AI-based software will assess the scripts, allot marks and automatically update the database. —BMB

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# Piles of neglect haunt Nagarbhavi streets

## Mounting civic chaos leaves residents furious as uncollected waste, darkened streets and official apathy trigger safety fears across locality

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Left: A heap of dry waste at 14th Block of Nagarbhavi; Above: No street lights on 4th Main of 14th Block of Nagarabhavi

**Frustrated households accuse sanitation staff of neglecting neighbourhood duties while hazardous leaf piles, malfunctioning lighting and rude behaviour deepen public outrage daily**

Residents of Nagarbhavi 2nd Stage have been facing several problems due to the irregular door-to-door collection of garbage. They complained that workers engaged in garbage collection have been working according to their whims and fancies. They added that the lack of streetlights is another issue that needs to be addressed without delay.

The residents said that pourakarmikas have been sweeping the roads and dumping dry leaves and waste on the roadside, but no effort has been made to clear the accumulated garbage. "Heaps of dry leaves are not only a nuisance but also pose a danger to vehicles parked at the adjacent vacant site. Many vehicles could be burnt if someone throws a cigarette butt onto the heaps of dry waste or if miscreants set the waste on fire. I want the contractor assigned to door-to-door garbage collection to ensure that the workers perform their duties properly. They are focused on collecting waste from commercial establishments rather than households, for reasons best known to them. Another problem is the lack of streetlights," said M Devaraju, a resident.

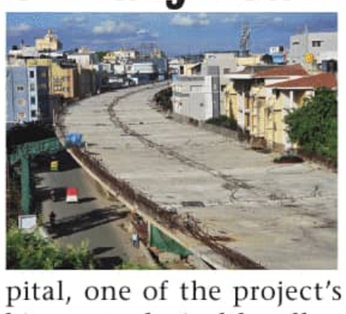
Criticising the garbage contractor and supervisor for their negligence and perfunctory attitude, Dattatreya Hegde, a resident of 1st Cross, 14th Block, said that he was fed up with their rude behaviour. "I am not happy with the workers engaged in door-to-door garbage collection. They are not only irregular but also rude. I want the higher authorities of Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited to ensure regular garbage collection to avoid inconvenience to residents of the area," he said.

Expressing a similar opinion, Nagarbhavi 2nd Stage 14th Block Residents Welfare Association president Ramachandra VN said that he had been complaining to the authorities concerned to streamline door-to-door garbage collection, but to no avail. "The workers are interested in collecting wet waste from commercial establishments. They are least bothered about collecting garbage from households. Many residents are facing serious problems due to the irregular collection of garbage. I have also flagged the issue of defunct streetlights. The engineer concerned is yet to fix the problem," said Ramachandra.

Meanwhile, BSWML supervisor Ramesh said that measures had been taken to clear heaps of dry leaves and waste. "The workers are collecting garbage from door to door on a regular basis. They are also collecting dry waste," said the supervisor.

Bengaluru West City Corporation (BWCC) Junior Engineer (Electrical) Sangamesh said that he would attend to the issue. "I will replace the fused bulbs by Wednesday," he said.

## Flyover finish line finally near



The long-delayed Ejipura–Kendriya Sadan flyover project has finally reached its final stage after eight years, with authorities aiming to open it to the public later this year. The 2.38-km flyover, launched in 2017 at a cost of ₹203.20 crore, faced multiple setbacks from the outset, including contractor negligence, payment disputes with subcontractors, machinery shortages, and land acquisition issues. As a result, commuters in Koramangala, Ejipura, Anepalya, and Kendriya Sadan have endured severe traffic congestion for years.

Construction of the portal pier near St John's Hospital, one of the project's biggest technical hurdles, finally received approval and began in February this year, giving fresh momentum to the work. Officials said pile cap and pier construction are now complete, while installation of the remaining segments is progressing rapidly. Out of 762 segments, 728 have already been installed, with only 15 spans left to be completed. — BMB

## Civic elections head towards delay

Fresh uncertainty has emerged over the long-delayed Greater Bengaluru civic elections, even as the State Election Commission pushes to hold polls for the city's five corporations in June. Behind the scenes, efforts are reportedly underway to seek another postponement, with influential figures preparing to approach the Supreme Court over alleged flaws in ward delimitation, election preparedness, and administrative challenges.

The developments have raised questions because the Commission had recently held consultations with the Greater Bengaluru Authority committee and indicated that elections would be scheduled for June. However, sources say sections within the ruling establishment are hesitant to go to the polls immediately. Bengaluru has remained without elected local body representatives for more than five years, but political and logistical concerns are now being cited as reasons for delaying the process further.

Among the key issues being raised are the ongoing census-linked surveys, voter list revision work, a shortage of election staff, and the challenges of conducting polls during the monsoon season. There are also political concerns within the ruling Congress, including internal power struggles and uncertainty over electoral prospects across all five corporations. Some leaders are believed to favour postponing the elections until October or November.

Legal petitions challenging ward formation and the feasibility of completing the mandatory 45-day election process before the Supreme Court's June-end deadline are also expected. The state government is likely to seek additional time from the apex court, making another delay in the Greater Bengaluru civic elections a strong possibility. — BMB

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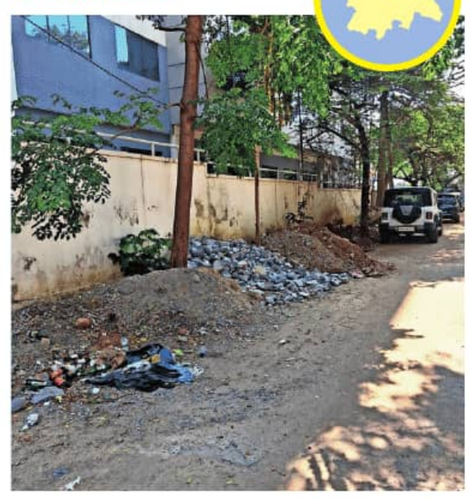
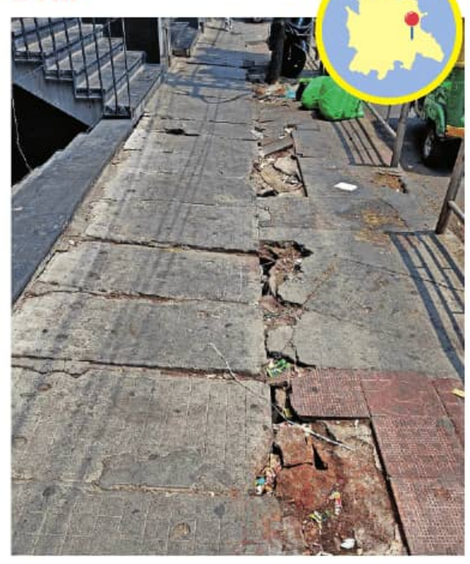
### Dark stretch
**Bilekahalli**



Debris dumped on the pavement along Pride Apartment Road near Rainbow Children's Hospital has prevented BESCOM from installing streetlights, leaving the area dark and unsafe at night. Despite repeated complaints to BBMP, no action has been taken.

### Broken footpath
**BTM**



The footpath near 16th Main Road in BTM 2nd Stage, close to McDonald's, is dangerously damaged, posing a serious risk of accidents. Yet, no urgent repair work has been initiated.

### Blackout woes
**Victoria Layout**

5th Cross in Victoria Layout has remained in complete darkness for the past three days despite multiple complaints. Authorities have yet to restore the streetlights or respond.

# Man killed in EV blast blaze

A 65-year-old autorickshaw driver died after an electric two-wheeler allegedly exploded while charging inside his house in Murphy Town, within the limits of the Halasuru Police Station, during the early hours of Tuesday.

The deceased has been identified as Lourdes Nadan alias Luthnathan. According to the complaint filed by his son, Frank Anthony L, a resident of Murphy Town, Halasuru, the incident occurred at around 3 am on May 12, 2026. Police said the family had put their electric two-wheeler on charge at around 11 pm on May 11 before going to sleep.

In his complaint, Frank Anthony stated that the electric two-wheeler allegedly exploded while charging, triggering a fire inside the house.

Lourdes Nadan, who was asleep in the hall at the time, suffered severe burn injuries in the incident.

Police said the family was living in a compact two-storey rented house. While Lourdes Nadan was sleeping on the ground floor, his son and daughter-in-law were asleep in a terrace-attached room on the upper floor.

The electric vehicle had reportedly been parked just outside the house, at a distance of barely two to three feet from the hall where the victim was sleeping at the time of the incident.

Family members rushed him to Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital for treatment. However, doctors declared him dead on arrival. Police have registered an Unnatural Death Report (UDR), and further investigation is under way to ascertain the exact cause of the explosion and fire. **BMB**

# Antler dealers fall into net

Officials of the Organised Crime Wing (East) of the Central Crime Branch have arrested three people for allegedly selling prohibited deer antlers worth Rs 10 lakh on May 10.

According to officials, they received a tip-off from an informant on May 9, stating that some people were involved in the sale of wild animal antlers near a college in Chikkabanavara.

Subsequently, a case under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, was registered against them at Chikkabanavara Police Station.

During a raid conducted by the officers, three persons were nabbed. Upon questioning, the accused allegedly confessed to the crime and stated that they had committed it to earn a large amount of money.

On the same day, they were produced before the court and remanded to seven days of police custody.

Officials said that two accused are absconding and efforts are being made to trace them. **BMB**

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# Concrete tentacles choke forests in city's outskirts

## Bengaluru's growing concrete footprint is rapidly consuming natural landscapes, leaving fragmented forests and shrinking green buffers behind

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Bengaluru and its surrounding areas are quietly losing forest cover. A deforestation map based on satellite imagery shows that Bengaluru's outskirts, along with the southern and eastern parts of the city, have lost a significant amount of forest cover between 2019 and 2024.

The study by researchers from Karunya Institute of Technology and Sciences in Coimbatore and the AI Research Institute for Science and Engineering (AIRISE) in the USA also underscores that dense forest loss is concentrated near expanding urban settlements and road networks.

The analysis reveals that forest cover reduced from 25.89 per cent to 17.39 per cent, indicating a substantial loss of vegetated land. While 992.14 square kilometres of the study area was under forest cover in 2018, it dropped to 666.28 square kilometres in 2024.

According to the forest map prepared by the researchers, Bengaluru's forest cover in 2018 was highly concentrated along the city's outskirts, with large stretches of unbroken forests, especially in the southern and eastern regions. The 2018 forest map also showed large continuous forest patches along the southern and eastern sides. However, by 2024, there had been a dramatic shrinkage of forest areas, resulting in fragmented forest patches. This was also accompanied by a sharp surge in built-up land.

Researchers underlined that this change in land use and land cover was most evident near areas that underwent urbanisation, including human settlements and infrastructure expansion.

**Researchers warn shrinking tree cover and fragmented landscapes around the city could worsen ecological imbalance, driven by aggressive infrastructure growth and expanding settlements**

According to the study, the built-up area expanded by about 14.7 per cent during the period, while forest cover declined by 8.2 per cent.

The built-up area increased from 33.62 per cent in 2018 to 40.84 per cent in 2024, reflecting rapid urbanisation in and around Bengaluru.

Other land use and land cover categories, such as plantations and water bodies, also declined; however, the drop was not alarming.

Researchers noted that the surge in built-up areas and the considerable decline in forest cover highlight the need for stronger forest protection measures, along with sustainable land use planning in and around the city.

"The change in land use successfully conveys the extent and direction of land cover change, supporting the model in identifying deforestation trends and urban expansion. These patterns highlight the need for responsible land use planning and forest protection measures in the region," the researchers stated.

# Five arrested in hydro ganja racket

Malleshwaram and Ashoknagar police stations have arrested five persons, including three from other states and two locals, under the NDPS Act. Police teams seized 3 kg 686 grams of hydro ganja, which was allegedly sold to the accused at a wholesale value of Rs 1.28 crore, while its market value is estimated at Rs 2.56 crore. Upon receiving credible information, police officers conducted raids at several locations, leading to the arrests.

During interrogation, all the accused allegedly confessed to the crime and stated that they were selling the banned substance to college students and members of the public. The hydro ganja was allegedly supplied through local and interstate suppliers at cheaper rates. Ashoknagar police seized 3.222 kg of hydro ganja worth Rs 1.12 crore, while Malleshwaram police recovered 464 grams valued at Rs 16.24 lakh. The five accused have been remanded in judicial custody, and efforts are on to trace suppliers. **BMB**

# Halasuru police seek family of hit and run victim

Weeks after a hit-and-run incident near Hutson Junction claimed the life of a man aged around 50 to 55, Halasuru police are making efforts to trace the family of the deceased, who succumbed to his injuries at Victoria Hospital on May 9.

According to police reports, the victim was hit by a two-wheeler on RRMR Road within the limits of the Halasuru Traffic Police station on April 17 between 8 pm and 9.30 pm. The victim had sustained a severe injury to his right leg and was undergoing treatment until he passed away.

Police described the man as being 5.5 feet tall, with a wheatish complexion and an average build. He was found wearing a blue-and-yellow striped shirt and grey shorts. Authorities have appealed to the public for help in tracing the relatives of the deceased. **BMB**

# Burglary gang held after raids

KR Puram Police have arrested three accused from Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh in connection with house thefts reported on March 3 and March 11. Officials seized 196 grams of gold jewellery, 1 kg 756 grams of silver articles, and Rs 22,000 in cash worth a total of Rs 40 lakh between March 8 and March 20. According to the complaint, a resident of Anandapura filed a complaint with the police on February 20, stating that he had left for a trip to Pune the previous day while his wife and children remained at home. On February 20 morning, the victim's wife returned from a nearby shop in T C Palya with her children to find their house open and valuables stolen. **BMB**

# Karnataka measles cases cross last year's total

## Despite strong MR vaccination coverage, measles cases continue rising in Karnataka, exposing gaps in awareness, diagnosis, and complete immunisation practices

Iffath Fathima
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Karnataka has already recorded 1,172 measles cases between January 1 and April 2026, marginally surpassing the total 1,163 cases reported during the whole of 2025, according to data from the State Surveillance Unit under the Department of Health and Family Welfare.

The state has crossed last year's total within the first four months of 2026, indicating a concerning rise in infections across districts. The latest surveillance data further revealed that 140 measles cases were recorded in a single week between April 20 and April 26, 2026. Health experts note that measles spread rapidly, particularly among unvaccinated children and vulnerable populations living in crowded settings.

Dr N Karthik Nagesh, Program Director - Pediatric Centres of Excellence, Aster Hospitals Karnataka and Lead Consultant, Aster RV Hospital, Bangalore, said, "I agree that the incidence of measles has probably gone up in this last one year. Reasons could include immunisation gaps and possibilities of mis-immunisation, especially among migrant populations. Many people keep moving from place to place. Measles is a very infectious virus. Even a few cases in communities can spread quickly because of overcrowding, lack of sanitation and close contact in schools and urban spaces." The doctor recently attended to two children suspected of measles infection. "One child tested positive. It was an unusual presentation where symptoms were not very overt, but because we suspected measles, we sent antibody testing and it came back positive. Another child has fever, rash and measles-like symptoms, but we are still waiting for reports," said Dr Nagesh.

Health professionals also pointed out that delayed diagnosis could be another reason for the spread of cases. Early symptoms usually include fever, cough, coryza, severe runny nose and watery eyes. Experts say children presenting with these symptoms should also be examined for Koplik spots, small white spots inside the mouth that are considered among earliest signs of measles.

However, these symptoms are often missed during initial stages, delaying diagnosis until characteristic rash appears after persistent fever. By then, the risk of transmission to others increases significantly, particularly among children in schools and community settings.

Another reason could be partial immunity. "Two doses of MR vaccine are required. One is recommended at 9 to 12 months and another at 16 to 24 months under the National Immunisation Schedule, which also follows WHO and UNICEF protocols. If only one dose is given, a child may have partial protection and classical symptoms may get missed," Dr Nagesh said.

Doctors noted that while case numbers have increased, there is no major surge and vaccination awareness remains crucial. "It is not as if there is a big surge. These cases should not have been there despite robust MR and MMR programmes. If a child has fever, cough, cold and rash, social distancing and isolation are necessary because measles is highly infectious," he said.

> **"One child tested positive. It was an unusual presentation where symptoms were not very overt, but because we suspected measles, antibody testing confirmed it**
>
> – Dr N Karthik Nagesh, Program Director

According to Ministry of Health and Family Welfare data, India's MR vaccination coverage stands at 93.7 percent for first dose and 92.2 percent for second dose as per 2024-25 HMIS data. India's Universal Immunisation Programme has reduced under-five mortality from 45 to 32 per 1,000 live births between 2014 and 2020 and introduced over six new vaccines, including MR vaccine.

## K'taka supercharges EV infrastructure push

Union Minister H D Kumaraswamy, yesterday announced approval of electric vehicle charging infrastructure proposals worth Rs 50,386 crore across states, including Rs 1,232.6 crore for Karnataka. He said Ministry of Heavy Industries has launched schemes to make India's automotive sector globally competitive. "I am happy to announce approval of Karnataka's proposal for 1,243 EV chargers with an outlay of Rs 1,232.6 crore. Proposals worth Rs 50,386 crore have been approved for 4,874 chargers across states and CPSUs," he said after inaugurating a conference on nationwide EV charging infrastructure under the PM E-DRIVE Scheme. Kumaraswamy said Rs 2,000 crore has been released in the first phase and assured support to proactive states. Approved proposals include HPCL, IOCL, BPCL and states including Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Kerala, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan. — BMB

## SIT excavation workers still await payment

Allegations have surfaced that labourers and JCB operators involved in the SIT-led excavation linked to the alleged burial case in Dharmasthala are yet to receive payment. Search operations were conducted from July 28 to August 13 last year at 17 locations identified by "Mask Man" Chinnaiah, using manual labour and JCB machines. While two JCB owners reportedly received ₹71,500, several daily wage workers from different panchayat areas remain unpaid, with dues crossing ₹80,000. Additional expenses for shamianas, tools, water bottles, and vehicles used to transport workers have pushed pending payments beyond ₹2 lakh. Responsibility for arranging labourers, JCBs, and materials was reportedly assigned to Dharmasthala Gram Panchayat, creating confusion over liability. A SIT official said team was conducting investigation and issues would be examined. — BMB

## 592 instruments needed in state, only 383 available

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

These details have been provided by KSPCB to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

The details have been provided in response to a suo motu case registered by the principal bench of the National Green Tribunal in 2023, following a news item highlighting the failure of state pollution control boards across the country in mitigating and controlling pollution. The news item stated that the State Pollution Control Board (SPCB), as well as the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), have miserably failed to effectively contribute to curbing pollution. Moreover, pollution control boards across India are in a state of shambles, though in the course of time, their mandate has been expanded much beyond the water-related issues.

It also underlined that the report states that the SPCBs do not have the resources and capacity to perform the functions assigned to them under various laws due to inadequate sanctioned strength of personnel, a high number of vacancies, especially in technical positions, absence of proper training, lack of pollution monitoring and abatement equipment, absence of technically competent leadership, protracted enforcement mechanisms, insufficient funds and ineffectual spending.

According to KSPCB, specifications for unavailable equipment and instruments are being finalised and will be added to the laboratories within two years.

In the recent report by KSPCB to CPCB, the state pollution control board has reiterated that currently, 468 out of the total of 723 sanctioned posts in the KSPCB are lying vacant. These consist of scientific (142 posts sanctioned), engineering (278 posts sanctioned), and administration (303 posts sanctioned. However, there are 107 scientific, 160 engineering, and 201 administration posts unoccupied.

The Board has clarified that appointments to the vacant posts were held up due to pending adjudication in the High Court of Karnataka, wherein the validity of the Karnataka Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions and of Appointments or Posts in the services under the State) Act, 2022, has been challenged.

## Leopard attack forces major MM Hills restrictions

In the wake of the death of a 10-year-old in a leopard attack near Male Mahadeshwara (MM) Hills on May 10, Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar B Khandre has directed Karnataka Forest Department officials to allow pedestrian access to Mahadeshwara Betta only during Shivaratri and Ugadi festivals. During a virtual meeting held at Vikas Soudha on Tuesday with senior Karnataka Forest Department officials, Khandre instructed that devotees should not be allowed to walk the entire 14-kilometre stretch to Nagamale.

Karnataka Forest Department has also proposed that devotees travelling to Nagamale from the ticket counter should use jeep services. For the remaining 3-kilometre forest trail, markers would be placed along both sides of the path to improve visibility and help visitors identify animals from a safe distance.

Similarly, access to Madappa Hill, which involves a 7-kilometre trek, may also be restricted to Shivaratri and Ugadi festival periods instead of year-round visits. Forest personnel would be deployed to ensure devotee safety.

Authorities further recommended installing warning boards near the steps of Male Mahadeshwara Hill and ticket counters to alert visitors about the presence of elephants, leopards, tigers and other wildlife.

Following incidents reported on May 10 on the trekking route to Nagamale shrine near Male Mahadeshwara Hills in Hanur taluk, Khandre has also ordered temporary suspension of grazing and transit routes passing through wildlife movement zones. The directive applies to areas frequented by leopards, tigers, elephants, bears and other wild animals, especially locations with a history of human-wildlife conflict.

The Minister instructed that grazing activities should be carried out only in compliance with recently issued Standard Operating Procedures.

Circulars issued by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden stated that grazing operations under Karnataka Forest Department and State Tourism Development Board can continue only after all SOP-related safety preparations are completed. — BMB

# Dept details actions taken against illegal sand mining

## Report on enforcement actions by Department of Mines and Geology to curb illegal sand quarrying from Sharavathi backwaters highlights nearly Rs 24 crore collected in fine

Over the last few years, the Department of Mines and Geology in Karnataka has collected nearly Rs 240 lakh as penalty from 633 cases of illegal quarrying and transportation of minor minerals from the Sharavathi backwaters in Shivamogga.

INFOCUS ILLEGAL MINING

During the year 2022-23, the department recovered Rs 39.29 lakh through 135 illegal quarrying and transportation cases. In 2023-24, nearly Rs 138 lakh was recovered through 64 cases, and in 2024-25 (up to December), Rs 61.24 lakh was recovered as a penalty from 26 illegal quarrying, transportation and stock cases.

These details have been submitted by the Department of Mines and Geology in a report to the National Green Tribunal.

The department has clarified that suitable actions against the illegal quarrying and transportation of sand in the backwaters of Sharavathi river are being taken by the Department of Mines and Geology, Revenue, Police and Taluk Sand Monitoring Committee.

The report has been filed following a suo motu case registered by the green tribunal in response to a news item in 2023 highlighting illegal sand mining in the area.

**Department of Mines and Geology assures suitable action against illegal sand quarrying and transport, in report to NGT as part of suo motu case filed in 2023**

The Taluk Sand Committee has also informed that during 2023-24, 108 vehicles were seized, and during the year 2024-25, as many as 53 vehicles were seized by the end of November, and penalties have been levied as per law.

Actions by the committee were taken based on the information received from various sources regarding illegal sand quarrying. Following such leads, the committee, along with the police department, conducted a joint spot inspection and seized the sand quarried and stacked.

Similarly, based on the telephonic complaints received from the public, the Department of Mines and Geology conducted spot inspections in 2024. During the spot inspection, while no vehicles were seized for illegal quarrying and transportation, it was found that nearly 80 million tonnes of sand had been illegally quarried, stockpiled and prepared for transport without mineral dispatch permits in the Jack Well area, which supplies drinking water to Hosanagara City. The sand was seized and disposed of as per Rule 31-R of Karnataka Minor Mineral Concession (Amendment) Rules, 2020.

—**Garima Prasher**

## INBRIEF

### Oversight cited in hospital wall collapse

The inquiry report in connection with the collapse of a compound wall at Bowring Hospital that claimed seven lives, including that of a child, was submitted to the Karnataka government on Tuesday. Bengaluru Deputy Commissioner G Jagadeesha has submitted the report. According to sources, the report noted that a cricket net facility had been created near the wall. Sources further said the hospital administration had allegedly developed a stadium-like cricket practice area near the wall using CSR funds provided by a donor.

The report has held the negligence and irresponsibility of Health Department engineers, contractors, and the hospital administration responsible for the tragedy. The inquiry report identified the dumping of large quantities of soil adjacent to the compound wall as the primary reason behind the collapse. **IANS**

### CBI registers FIR over NEET 2026 paper leak

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered an FIR in connection with the alleged paper leak and irregularities in the conduct of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate) (NEET-UG) 2026 examination, following a complaint from the Department of Higher Education under the Ministry of Education, Government of India. According to officials, the FIR has been filed under charges related to criminal conspiracy, cheating, criminal breach of trust, theft and destruction of evidence under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). Cases have also been booked under the Prevention of Corruption Act and the Public Examination (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024.

Prior to the examination, the NTA reportedly received complaints and intelligence inputs alleging that certain documents had been circulated before the test was held. The CBI has initiated a comprehensive probe into the matter. **BMB**

# Sudharsan, Sundar help GT recover from early blows, Hyderabad fall behind in chase

IPL 2026

A composed half-century from Sai Sudharsan and a late flourish by Washington Sundar rescued Gujarat Titans from a shaky start and carried them to 168/5 against Sunrisers Hyderabad in their Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 clash at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Tuesday. However, that proved to be enough as Sunrisers Hyderabad batters folded with a lethal bowling attack by Gujarat, especially Kagiso Rabada.

After being asked to bat, Gujarat never really found early momentum as SRH's disciplined new-ball attack kept the hosts under pressure throughout the powerplay. Pat Cummins set the tone immediately with probing hard lengths, while Praful Hinge struck crucial blows to leave GT struggling at 34/2, their lowest powerplay score of the season.

Sai Sudharsan was once again the stabilising force for Gujarat. The left-hander weathered the difficult phase with calm accumulation before gradually shifting gears once the field spread. He found support first from Nishant Sindhu, whose brisk 22 off 14 injected some much-needed momentum after a sluggish start.

Gujarat Titans' Kagiso Rabada celebrates after dismissing Sunrisers Hyderabad's Abhishek Sharma

Sindhu counterattacked impressively, hammering Nitish Kumar Reddy for an 85-metre six and following it with boundaries against Hinge, but his promising stay ended when he miscued Pat Cummins to Heinrich Klaasen at long-off.

That dismissal brought Washington Sundar to the crease, and the all-rounder played a defining hand in reviving Gujarat's innings. Initially watchful, Sundar settled quickly against spin before targeting the pace bowlers in the death overs with clever placement and calculated aggression.

Meanwhile, Sudharsan continued his remarkable consistency this season. He pierced the off-side field regularly, striking elegant boundaries off Sakib Hussain and Eshan Malinga, while also launching a straight six over the bowler's head to move into the forties. His fifty came in style when he swept Shivang Kumar to the boundary, marking his third successive 50-plus score of the campaign.

The pair stitched together a crucial 60-run partnership for the fourth wicket, helping Gujarat recover from 68/3 after ten overs. Sundar's intent against the short ball and his ability to access gaps square of the wicket ensured the scoring rate never completely stalled during the middle phase. SRH, however, kept pulling things back at key moments. Cummins delivered an excellent spell of 1/20 in four overs, while Hinge's sharp spell of 2/10 provided the breakthrough platform.

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Sakib Hussain then removed Sudharsan for 61 off 44 balls when the batter miscued an attempted scoop to short third man. Despite that setback, Sundar ensured Gujarat finished strongly.

For SRH, Sakib Hussain finished with two wickets, while Cummins and Hinge played vital roles. **— IANS**

# Stalking cases dismissed as 'normal' till matters take ugly turn

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"People treat it like a minor issue unless something violent happens," she said. "Even my friends joked that it was just 'one-sided love'. That makes women doubt whether they should even report it."

Women's rights campaigners said stalking often goes unreported because victims fear social stigma, retaliation, or lack of confidence in the legal process. Manu Chowdhry, a lawyer with the Gamana Women's Collective, told BM that stalking has been normalised extensively.

"It is viewed from a context of love, as a proposal but it (stalking) often escalates to violence (groping and other degrees of assault). The girl is in a confused state initially, due to varying reasons, including fear of being shamed and blamed for the actions of the stalker. When she has exhausted all other options of readdress, she reaches out to her family. Families try not to bring matters to the notice of authorities and find a solution through social conciliation," she explained.

According to her, the behaviour is often romanticised or interpreted as an expression of affection, though it can escalate into serious forms of violence, including physical assault.

In March, a 34-year-old woman, Firdos Banu, was allegedly stabbed to death by a man accused of stalking her in West Bengaluru after she rejected his advances.

Banuwas returning home from work when the accused, Hafiz, intercepted her and attacked her with a knife. According to the FIR, Hafiz had allegedly been stalking Banu for a long time and repeatedly pressured her to "love him".

"Stalking takes place in public spaces and the perpetrator is aware of the consequences. Despite this, the matter is dismissed as a behavioural issue, instead of strictly being called out as a criminal act by the police," said Chowdhry, adding that the authorities have assumed that the act is common among males in their adolescence/youth, hence making it dismissible.

"There have been cases where the perpetrator has been brought to the police station for negotiations/reconciliations but this is as far as it goes; no concrete action is taken. The department (police) is not gender sensitised and has no understanding of nuance.

By the time the hierarchy takes note of the issue, it has severely escalated — there is need for immediate action," she said.

Chowdhry said that existing parallel legal systems used to solve issues such as stalking must be strengthened alongside gender sensitisation.

"Awareness regarding alternative bodies of relief such as Parihar and other womens' organisations must be increased as most families view the process of dealing with the police as a punishment in itself.

The NCRB data portrays the failure of the system. Eve teasing and cat calling are also common issues experienced by women, especially in India. The issue is almost cultural with a large majority of our mainstream media normalising such behaviours," she said.

> **"There have been cases where the perpetrator has been brought to the police station for reconciliations but this is as far as it goes..**

Vimala KS, senior leader of All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA), said a majority do not consider stalking a violation. "Society must take cognisance of the issue — it is the unconcerned attitude that has led to this circumstance. Fear of repercussions is important," she said.

Drawing parallels with domestic violence cases, Vimala said many families lack confidence in the legal process and avoid approaching the police. She also alleged that several complaints are reduced to non-cognisable reports and closed without proper investigation, contributing to significant underreporting.

She further claimed that crime statistics do not always accurately capture the lived realities faced by women, particularly in cases involving harassment and intimidation in public spaces.

It is to be noted that NCRB data shows that Karnataka recorded 60 cases under sexual harassment (Section 75 BNS/ Section 354A IPC) in public places/pathways; 66 cases of voyeurism have also been recorded.

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**I,** KANCHAN KUMARI SINGH, Residing at No 12/1, Srinivas Reddy Layout, 1st Main Near Devarachikkanahalli Bus Stand, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore-560076, Have changed my name to KANCHAN SINGH vide affidavit dated 12/05/2026 sworn before Notary Aravind Patil G.G Bangalore

**I** J Joseph Lilly Wal R/o # 9, West Road, Austin Town, Bangalore 560047, Have changed my name to J Joseph Lilly Wall

## Change of Name

**I, Vishwanath Rama chandrappa, r/at No246, Ground Floor, Linganahalli, Sai Daksha Enclave, Singanayakanahalli, Yelahanka, Bangalore 560064 hereby declare that my wife's correct name is Shri Divya Vishwanath whereas in my Passport her name is mentioned as Shri Divya Vishwanth vide affidavit dt. 09.05.2026 sworn before Notary G R Ravichandra Reddy, Bangalore**

**I,** L KENIN ISAAC, R/o B-601, GINA SHALOM, BHATTARAHALLI, KR PURAM, Bangalore - 560049 have changed my name to KENIN ISAAC L for all puposes, vide affidavit dated 11-May-2026 before notary J. Anand Kumar, Blore-27

**I,** Shaik Munawar S/o Shaik Abdul Rahman R/o Flat No 201, Radiant Castle Apartment, 9th Cross, Cholanayakana Halli, Bengaluru-560032. Have Changed My Name Shaik Munavar to Shaik Munavar for All Purposes.

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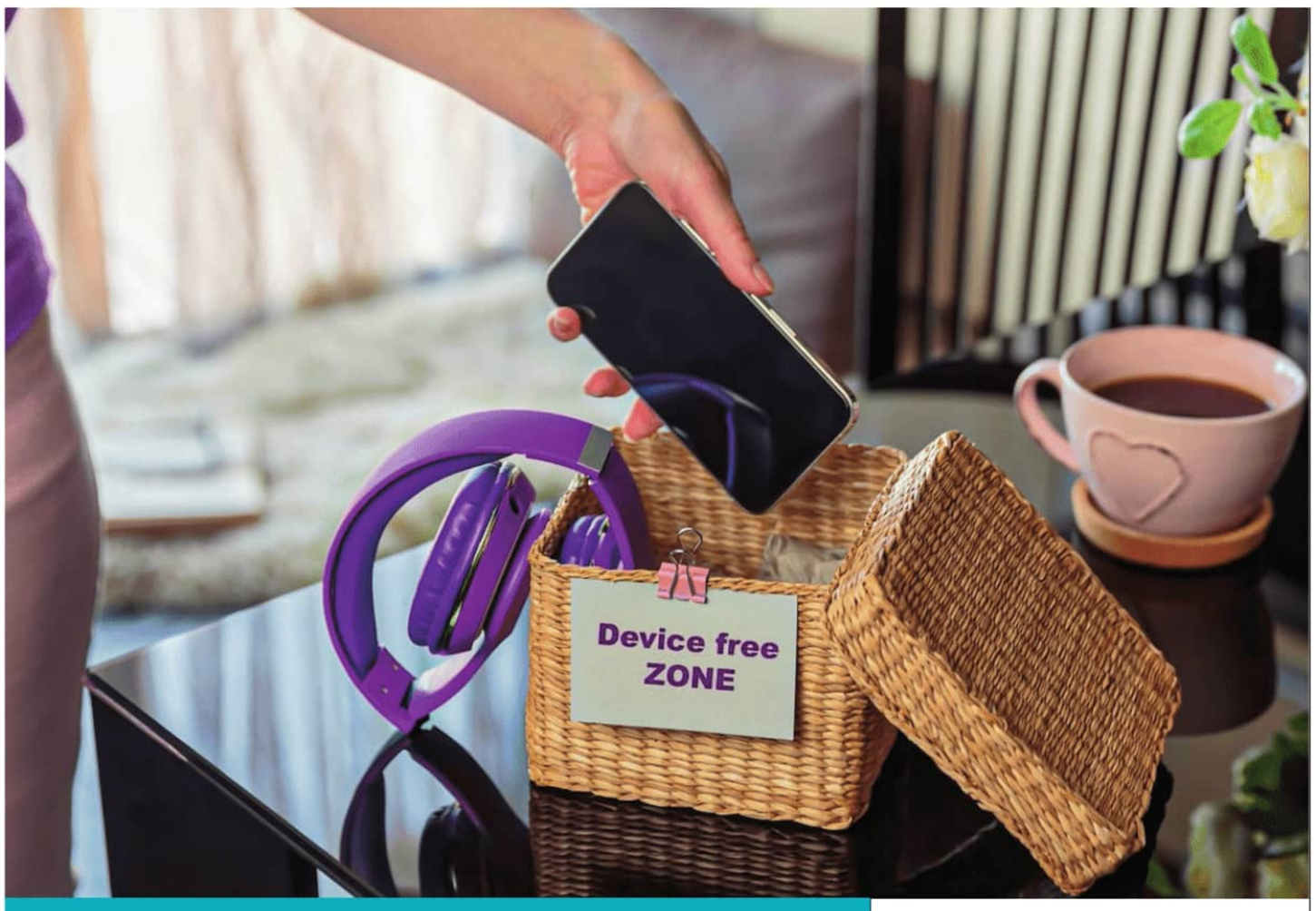



# DISCONNECT TO RECONNECT

## Research suggests reducing screen time can improve wellbeing, sleep, and offline social connection

Today, technology shapes almost everything we do, from sending emails to ordering food. But constant connections can leave people physically and mentally drained.

That is why many are turning to "digital detoxes," the practice of stepping away from devices and social media for a set period.

The idea is gaining traction online, with supporters promoting benefits of an "analogue lifestyle." Some even pay for digital retreats, hoping to become healthier and happier.

But do digital detoxes actually work, or are they simply another trend?

### What is a 'digital detox'?

The term "digital detox" comes from detoxification, the process of helping people safely withdraw from addictive substances such as alcohol or drugs, usually with professional support.

Digital detox means deliberately stepping back from technology to experience life with fewer distractions and strengthen offline relationships.

### Trouble with tech

Young people in Australia spend around nine hours each day looking at screens. Adults are not far behind, with Australians aged 45 to 64 spending up to six hours daily on screens.

As screen use rises, more people experience information overload, feeling physically and emotionally overwhelmed by too much data. A related issue is social media fatigue, caused by being constantly connected through online platforms.

At the same time, signs of resistance are emerging. Some younger people are replacing screens with hands-on hobbies such as knitting, joining chess clubs, and taking part in offline social activities.

They are also driving trends such as "raw-dogging boredom," where people sit through long-haul flights without headphones, and "friction-maxxing," which encourages building resilience by doing tasks that involve difficulty.

In that sense, digital detoxes are simply another online trend responding to digital overload.

Research suggests digital detoxes may offer benefits, though evidence remains far from conclusive.

A 2025 meta-analysis examined 20 randomised controlled trials focused on social media detoxes. It found that short breaks produced small but positive effects on life satisfaction and self-esteem. Participants also reported feeling less anxious, depressed, and lonely.

Another 2025 study restricted participants' smartphones to calls and texts for two weeks. The results were striking. Researchers found stronger positive effects on mental health than antidepressants.

Importantly, benefits came not only from reduced phone use but also from spending that time socialising in person, exercising, and being outdoors.

### Digital detoxes affect people differently

One factor is cultural context. Research suggests people in collectivist cultures such as Turkey may feel stronger pressure to respond quickly and maintain large online networks compared with people in individualistic societies. This means they may benefit more from social media breaks.

Gender also matters. Research shows women often use social media to maintain relationships and compare physical appearance with others, meaning they may benefit more from stepping away.

A 2020 study found women who took a one-week break from Instagram felt significantly more satisfied with life than women who continued using it. Researchers did not find same effect in men.

### All about approach

Research suggests digital detoxes can improve mental health, but approach matters.

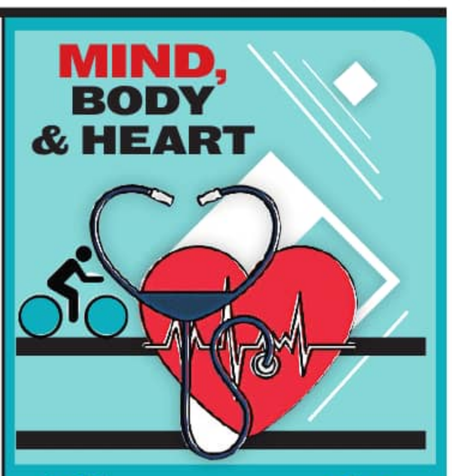
Going cold turkey is not ideal because drastic changes are harder to maintain. A 2023 study found people who reduced smartphone use by one hour daily experienced stronger and longer-lasting benefits than those who quit entirely.

### To make digital detox sustainable:

- identify habits such as checking phone too often
- create realistic plan to change them
- set specific goals, like leaving Instagram for one week
- tell family and friends for support
- track progress by noticing reduced anxiety or better sleep

Staying present in an increasingly digital world is difficult. But digital detox can help. Goals are not eliminating technology completely but using it more consciously and deliberately for healthier balance.

*By Joanne Orlando, Western Sydney University The conversation*




## All you need to know about...

*Gut reset*

**Start with water**

Your morning routine quietly shapes gut health for the rest of the day. Experts say starting with hydration after waking helps activate digestion and supports natural detoxification. A glass of warm or room-temperature water can gently wake up a digestive system and prepare the body for better nutrient absorption. Adding lemon or soaked chia seeds may provide antioxidants and fibre for extra support.

**Keep mornings calm**

Stress directly affects digestion and gut balance. Experts suggest beginning the day with stretching, meditation, deep breathing or gratitude practice to regulate cortisol levels. Calm mornings help the digestive system function more smoothly and support healthier gut-brain connection throughout the day. Even a few mindful minutes can improve overall comfort and reduce digestive discomfort.

**Choose smart foods**

Breakfast sets the tone for gut performance. Fibre-rich foods such as oats, fruits, nuts, yoghurt and legumes help feed beneficial bacteria while keeping energy stable. Probiotic-rich foods strengthen the balance between helpful and harmful bacteria, improving digestion and supporting immunity. Experts also recommend avoiding coffee on an empty stomach, as it may irritate gut lining and increase acidity. Pairing coffee with food or switching to herbal tea offers a gentler option.

**Move and listen**

Light movement such as yoga, stretching or short walks can stimulate digestion, ease bloating and encourage regular bowel movements. Paying attention to signals like bloating, sluggishness or heartburn helps personalise habits for long-term results. Experts say healthy guts are built through consistent small actions, not overnight fixes. Strong gut supports immunity, boosts mood, improves energy, and promotes overall wellbeing from inside out. —**Femina**

**MIRRORLIGHTS**

## Humidity, airflow important for greenery's cooling effect, study finds

Along with vegetation cover, greenery in urban places should be planned looking at humidity and airflow in order to have a cooling effect, an analysis of 138 cities in India has revealed.

Tree shade is among the fastest ways to make heat more bearable. It cuts direct sunlight, protects people outdoors, and therefore remains essential for heat action plans.

Lead author Angana Borah, research graduate at the Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar's department of civil engineering, said findings published in the journal Nature Communications point to a more practical approach to urban greening.

"The question is not whether cities should green. They should. The question is what kind of green, where, and how much," she said.

"In dry cities, vegetation can provide strong cooling benefits. In humid and compact neighbourhoods, planners also need to think about airflow and moisture build-up," Borah said.

Researchers analysed temperature and humidity data recorded during 2003-2020 across tropical savanna, semi-arid steppe, and humid subtropical climates.

Instead of relying only on land surface temperature, the team reconstructed the 'heat index', which combines temperature and humidity and is closer to how heat is felt by the human body.

"Greening is essential for climate adaptation, and shade gives people immediate relief," author Udit Bhatia, associate professor at Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar, said.

"Our results show that one-size-fits-all plantation targets miss part of the problem. Cities need greening strategies that are designed for shade, moisture, and ventilation together," Bhatia said.

—**PTI**

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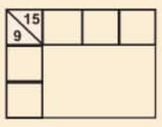
facebook.com/theBangaloremirror
@BangaloreMirror


## SOLVE IT IN A MINUTE

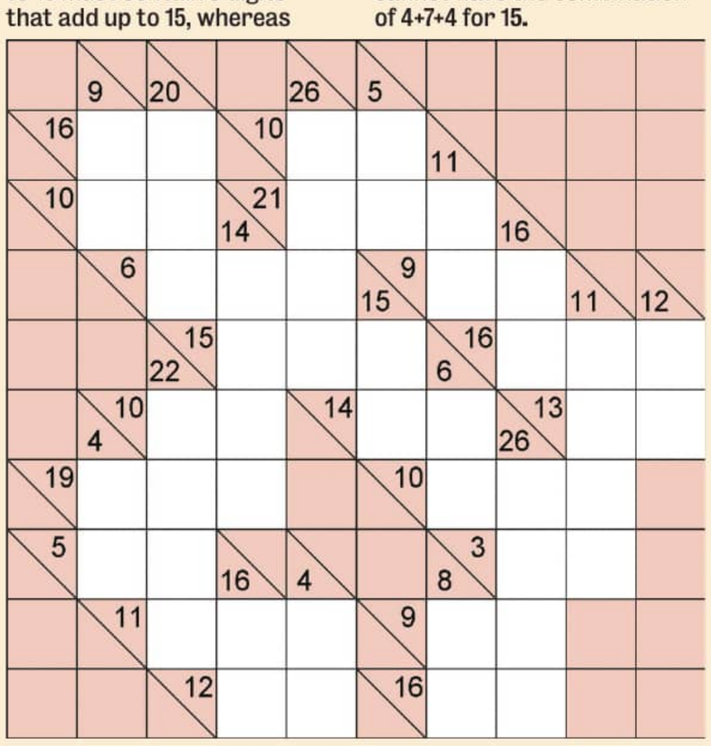
720! ÷ 719!=x!
x=?

## Kakuro

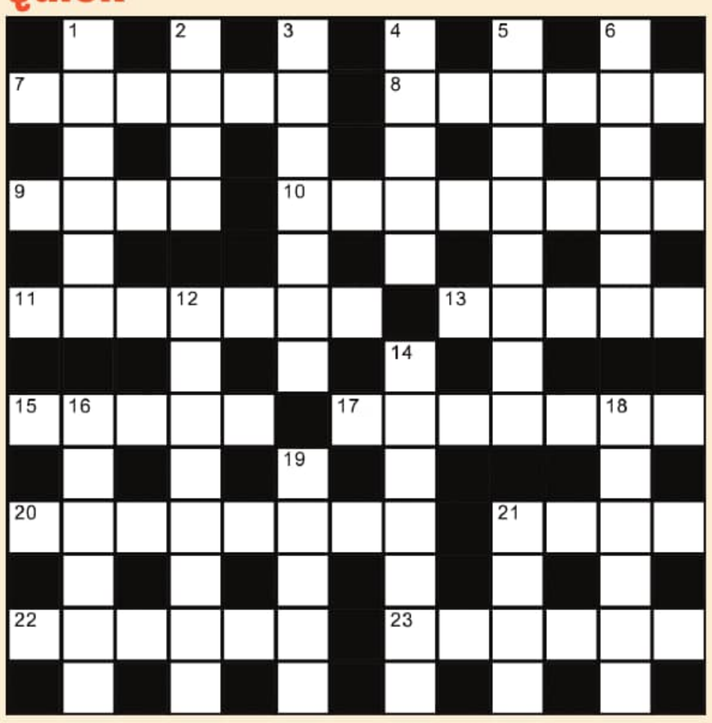
The numbers in the grey squares refer to the sums of the digits that you must fill into the empty spaces directly below or to the right of the grey square containing the number. For instance, in the given example, the 3 boxes horizontally next to 15 must contain 3 digits that add up to 15, whereas for 9, it is the 2 boxes placed vertically under it that must add up to 9. No zeros are used here, only the digits 1 through 9.



Note: A digit cannot appear more than once in any particular digit combination. For instance, in the example, we cannot have the combination of 4+7+4 for 15.



## Quick



**ACROSS**

7 Small, usually worthless pieces (6)
8 Go to ___ : go to Hell? (6)
9 Christmas (4)
10 Famous German novel : ___ ___ on the Western Front? (3,5)
11 Black-and-white (7)
13 Refreshment booth (5)
15 A social media update (5)
17 Had a cosy tete-a-tete? (7)
20 One's most reliable helper? (5,3)
21 Belonging to us (4)
22 Besieges or attacks (6)
23 Regal or royal (6)

**DOWN**

1 Marine creatures (6)
2 Shopping complex (4)
3 Generally (7)
4 Old Greek coins (5)
5 Aesop was a famous one? (8)
6 Adorns with precious stones (6)
12 Brothers (archaic); fellow members (8)
14 Movie theatre in Gandhi Nagar (7)
16 Bided one's time? (6)
18 Joins or enlists (6)
19 Hesitate (5)
21 Has (4)

## Quoteuncode

This puzzle is a substitution cipher in which one letter stands for another. If you think that Q equals C, it will equal C throughout the puzzle. Single letters, short words and words using an apostrophe give you clues to locating vowels. Solution is by trial and error.

**Today's CLUE: O EQUALS Y**

ZJAZOY JXXC ZV ANZV OXL NZBQ JQHV. EQBQI JXXC ZV ANZV OXL NZBQ JXYV.

### Linemaro

You could never be ice cream because you are so hot

### Mindchow

In a time of drastic change it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned usually find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists

### Joke of the day

There are two kinds of computers in the world. Those that waste your precious time and those that waste your time faster

## Loop

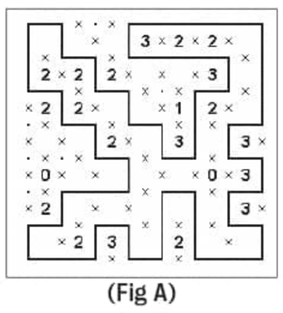
**Rules**

» Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines, creating a single loop (Fig A). » Crossovers or branches are not allowed (As shown by dotted lines in Fig B). » Numbers in the puzzle indicate the number of lines that should surround it, while empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines. » You can't draw lines around zeros. » Each puzzle has just one unique solution.

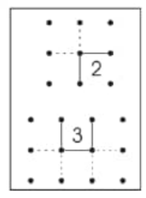
**How to begin:**

Example (Fig A) – Begin with the zero next to 3. Since no lines can be drawn around zero, mark crosses around it, as shown. Now there is a cross in one space around 3. So we know the three lines of 3 can only be drawn in the remaining three spaces. Next, these lines can only be extended in one direction each. Continue, using the same logic.

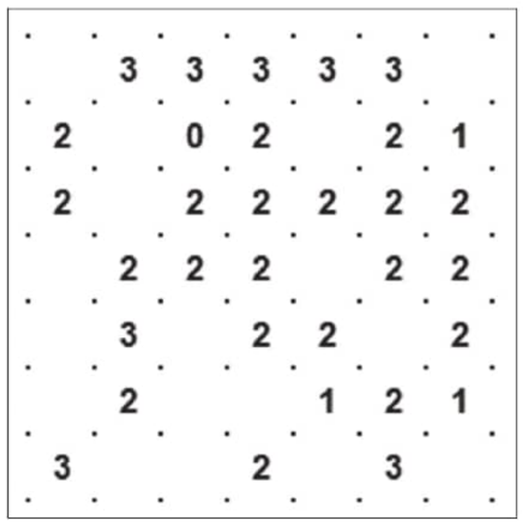
Hints: Keep eliminating possibilities by marking crosses in spaces between dots where a line isn't possible, i.e., if you have already completed required lines or where a line extension may create a branch or cause a dead-end (Fig B)



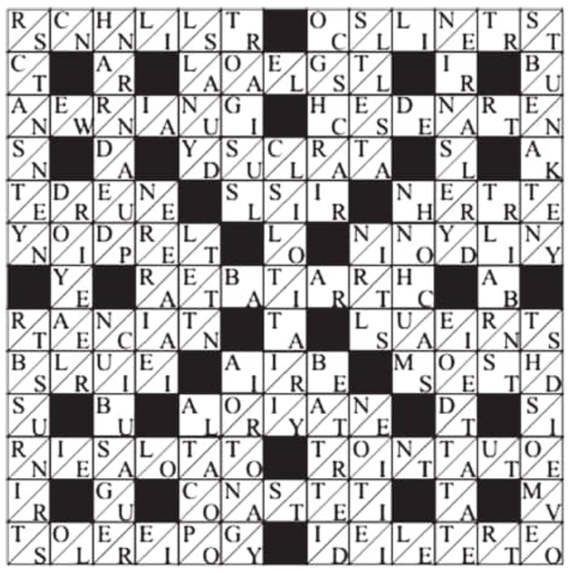
(Fig A)



(Fig B) Not Allowed



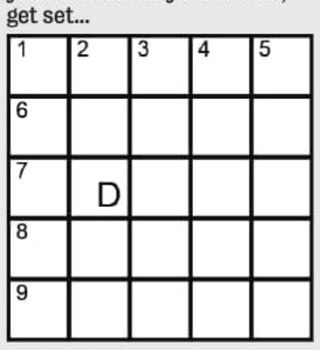
## Strikeout



This crossword has no clues and the answer is there waiting for you. All you have to do is find it in each square. You have a choice of two letters, one of which you must strike out. If you choose correctly, you will be left with a grid that contains real words.

## Fast five

How long do you think it will take you to unscramble the ten words shown below and fit them correctly into the grid in the order given one letter has already been entered to get you started? on your marks, get set...



**ACROSS**

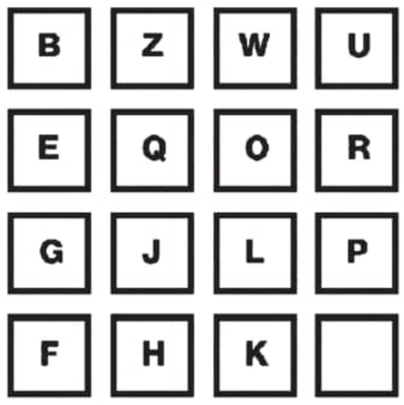
1 A cusp; 6 Ma ark; 7 Ailed; 8 Far me; 9 I fled

**DOWN**

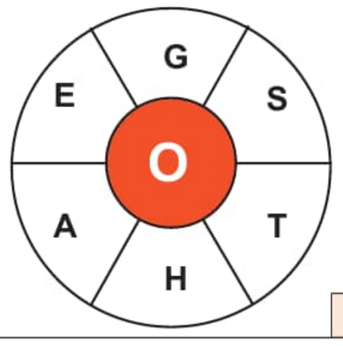
1 Iff Sk; 2 Arced; 3 A rale; 4 I a mum; 5 Pedal

## Mensapuzzle

Ho




## Bull's eye




How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown? Every word must contain the central letter. There should be one seven-letter word. British English Dictionary is used as a reference.

**08** Average; **09** Good; **11** Outstanding

## SudokuChallenge

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | | 6 | | | | 3 |
| | | 2 | 4 | | 3 | 8 | | |
| | 9 | | | 1 | | | 2 | |
| 8 | | 9 | 6 | | 1 | 5 | | 4 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | | 6 | 8 | | 5 | 2 | | 9 |
| | 4 | | | 5 | | | 3 | |
| | | 7 | 2 | | 9 | 1 | | |
| 5 | | | | 4 | | | | 7 |

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from one to nine must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

## Gofigure

Place the four numbers in the first, third, fifth, and seventh boxes and whatever operators you care to use in the second, fourth, and sixth boxes in the correct order to get the answer. Use the numbers only once.

**Easy**

[ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ] = 21

4 9 4 4

**Medium**

[ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ] = 14

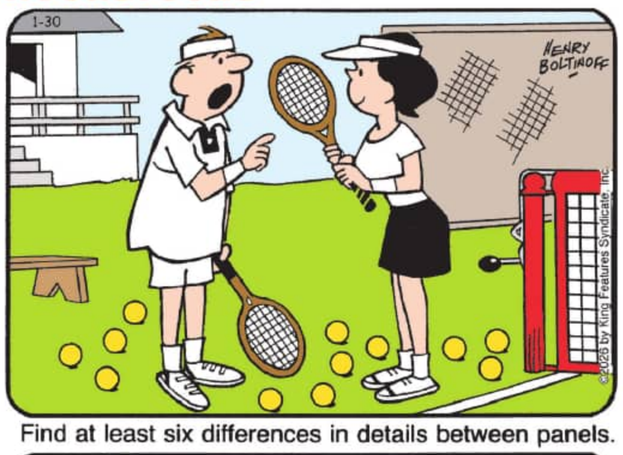
6 7 9 5

**Hard**

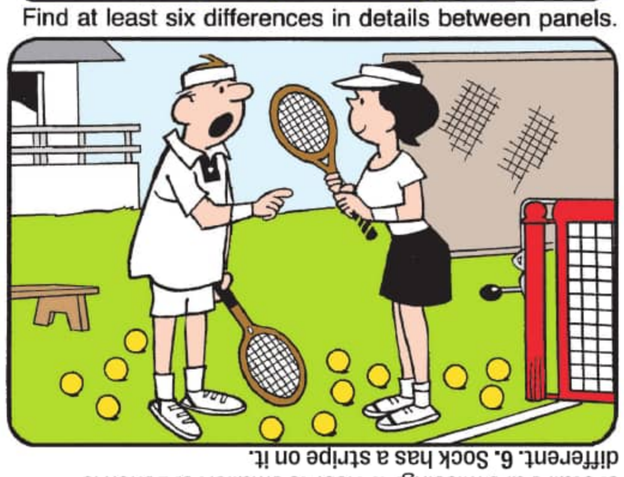
[ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ][ ] = 13

2 2 4 9

## Hocusfocus




Find at least six differences in details between panels.



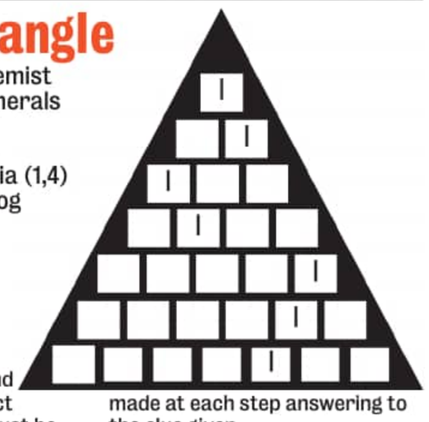
**Differences:** 1. Arm is lower. 2. Leg is moved. 3. Stairs are missing. 4. Visor is smaller. 5. Bench is different. 6. Sock has a stripe on it.

## Riddler

Rearrange the letters of each word below to get a new word that ends in a silent letter. 1. Balm, 2. Cowers, 3. Melons, 4. Sepal & 5. Opted

## Alpha triangle

1 Iodine for the chemist
2 101 in Roman numerals
3 Solid water
4 Parasitic insects
5 Intestinal bacteria (1,4)
6 Scottish sheep dog
7 Clash



Beginning at the top move towards the bottom seven-letter word by adding a letter at each step and rearranging. A correct and different word must be made at each step answering to the clue given.

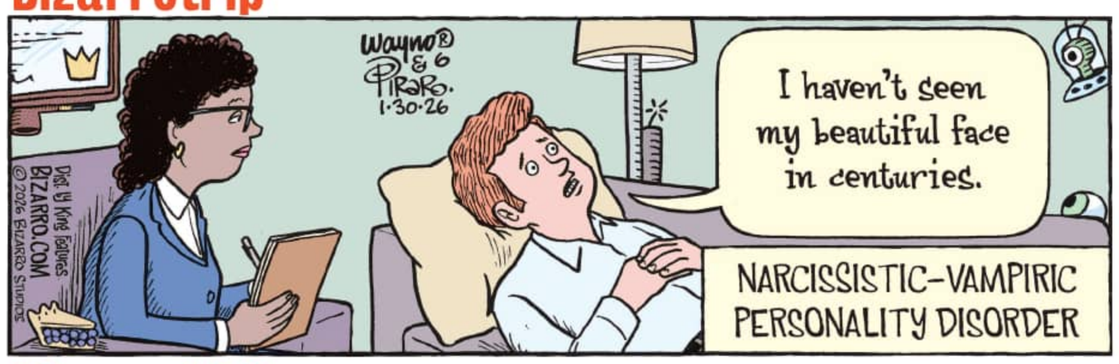

DIFFICULT TO SOLVE? FIND THESE SOLUTIONS ON THE NEXT PAGE »

# COMICS

## Popeye

PAPPY IS GITTIN' SUED FER A MILLING BUCKS!
I KNOW!! HE BROKE MOLLY MUDHOOK'S HEART!
PHOOEY! SHE AN' HER BROTHER ARE A PAIR OF CON ARTISTS!
I FEAR I CANNOT DISCUSS THE CASE WITH YOU... I HAVE BEEN APPOINTED JUDGE FOR YOUR GUILTY PAPPY'S TRIAL!
?
?
8-11
©2025 King Features Syndicate, Inc. World rights reserved.
popeye.com

## Bizarrotrip


Wayno & Piraro 1·30·26
I haven't seen my beautiful face in centuries.
NARCISSISTIC-VAMPIRIC PERSONALITY DISORDER
Dist. by King Features BIZARRO.COM
©2026 BIZARRO STUDIOS

## Diamond Lil

THERE...I GOT US A HALF-AND-HALF PIZZA. NOW WE CAN BOTH BE HAPPY WITH OUR TOPPINGS, RIGHT?
WHAT NOW?!
THERE'S AN OLIVE ON MY SIDE
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www.creators.com
Bannister

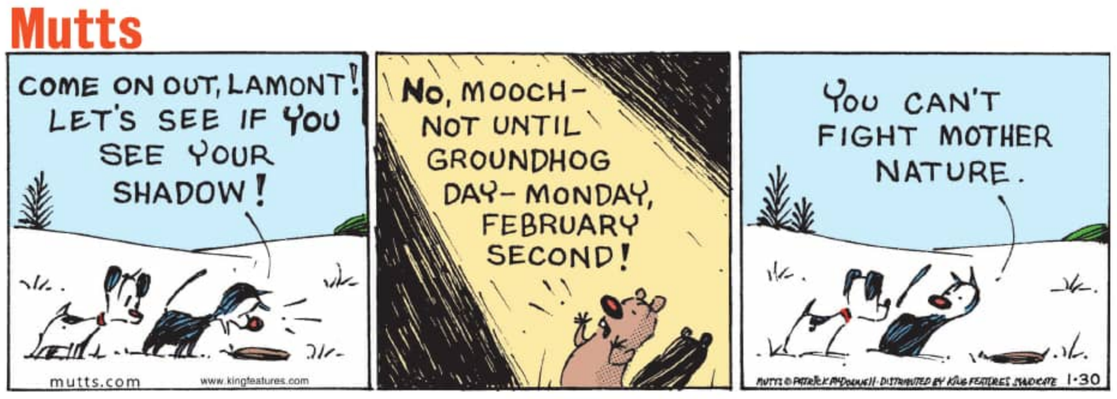
## Hart of the city

WOO-HOO!! GO PHILLY MIDDLE!
QUICK CHANGE
PITZ PREP
PHILLY MIDDLE
SCORES
PENN MIDDLE 1:29
PITZ PREPATORY 1:38
PHILLY MIDDLE 2:41
THIRD PLACE? HOW DO I KEEP MY TEAMMATES' SPIRITS UP?
OMG, WE BEAT OUR PERSONAL BEST!!
WE'RE GETTING ON THE PODIUM FOR SURE!
PODIUM! PODIUM! PODIUM!
PODIUM! PODIUM! PODIUM!
I GUESS THEIR SPIRITS ARE PLENTY LIFTED!
HEART OF THE CITY © 2026 ANDREWS MCMEEL
@GOCOMICS.COM/HEARTOFTHECITY

## Crankshaft

THE ONE THING I REALLY DON'T MISS IS THE FUNDRAISING.
I REALLY DIDN'T MIND SELLING ALL OF THE CANDY, TURKEYS, CHEESES, AND EVEN MATTRESSES...
BUT I'M GLAD I GOT OUT BEFORE BAND BITCOINS!
©2026 Mediagraphics, Inc. Dist. by Andrews McMeel Syndication
BATIUK & DAVIS tombatiuk.com/books
1-30

## Mutts


COME ON OUT, LAMONT! LET'S SEE IF YOU SEE YOUR SHADOW!
No, MOOCH- NOT UNTIL GROUNDHOG DAY- MONDAY, FEBRUARY SECOND!
YOU CAN'T FIGHT MOTHER NATURE.
mutts.com
www.kingfeatures.com
1·30

# WRITTEN IN THE STARS

DR SUNDEEP KOCHAR

## If it's your birthday today

Variety and multitasking define your year ahead. You will be juggling several different projects, all of which bring unique rewards. Avoid spreading yourself too thin by setting clear priorities each morning. A short trip for business leads to a long-term personal connection. Your mental agility keeps you ahead of the competition in a very fast-paced professional environment.

**Aries** Mar 21 – Apr 20
Prioritise your peace without compromising your worth, setting clear boundaries while staying kind. By focusing on self-care and awareness, you can protect your energy and create a more aligned, fulfilling path.

**Taurus** Apr 21 – May 20
You may reflect on the past, but healing begins by accepting your journey and allowing yourself to grow beyond it. Embrace your worth and step forward without feeling limited or held back.

**Gemini** May 21 – Jun 21
Your vision is ready to take shape, so stay open to growth and trust your intuition. By balancing caution with courage, you can transform your ideas into something expansive and meaningful.

**Cancer** Jun 22 – July 23
Step into a mindset of confidence and self-worth, creating your life from within. By embodying who you aspire to be, you naturally attract opportunities, respect, and a more fulfilling sense of abundance.

**Leo** Jul 24 – Aug 23
Progress may feel slow, but your efforts are building something meaningful. Stay focused on long-term goals, express your ideas freely, and trust that your dedication will bring rewarding and lasting results.

**Virgo** Aug 24 – Sep 23
Release fear-driven actions and focus on doing what feels right for you. By trusting yourself and letting go of outcomes, you regain control, feel empowered, and move forward with confidence.

**Libra** Sep 24 – Oct 22
Trust your creative instincts and bring your ideas to life without hesitation. By overcoming self-doubt and staying confident, you can move forward boldly and create something truly meaningful and fulfilling.

**Scorpio** Oct 23 – Nov 22
Changes in relationships are guiding you toward deeper understanding and balance. By staying strong, patient, and open, you can build more supportive connections and navigate challenges with resilience.

**Sagittarius** Nov 23 – Dec 22
Reconnect with your passion and focus your energy on what truly matters. By combining enthusiasm with clarity, you can move forward confidently and create opportunities that align with your true desires.

**Capricorn** Dec 23 – Jan 20
Abundance is already flowing toward you, so shift your mindset to appreciation and openness. By embracing what you have, you create space for greater opportunities and meaningful growth ahead.

**Aquarius** Jan 21 – Feb 19
You are ready for growth and new opportunities, guided by your ideas and experience. By moving thoughtfully and leaving behind what no longer serves you, you can create meaningful progress.

**Pisces** Feb 20 – Mar 20
Supportive relationships bring you strength and joy, encouraging you to embrace new beginnings. Trust this phase, stay present, and allow life to unfold naturally with confidence and ease.

www.sundeepkochar.com

# KIDZONE

Krishna, Bengaluru

Ramya, Bengaluru

Kidzone, Bangalore Mirror, No. 74/2, Sanjana Plaza, 4th & 5th Floor, Elephant Rock Road, Jayanagar 3rd block, Bengaluru-560 011;
Please send hard copies of your artwork in A4 size only.

# SOLUTIONS

**SOLVE IN 1M**
720*719!/719!=x!
720=x!
6!=x! x=6

**RIDDLER**
1. Lamb, 2. Escrow, 3. Solemn, 4. Lapse & 5. Depot

**QUOTE UNCODE**
Always look at what you have left. Never look at what you have lost.

**BULL'S EYE**
ghost, goat, hose, host, HOSTAGE, oath, shoat, shoe, shot, those, toga

**FAST FIVE**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | C | A | U | P |
| K | A | R | M | A |
| I | D | E | A | L |
| F | R | A | M | E |
| | E | L | I | D |

**STRIKE OUT**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | X | L | E | | C | U | E | | T | H | I | S |
| I | | A | | | A | | G | | | C | | U |
| N | I | C | K | E | L | | D | Y | N | A | M | O |
| E | | I | | T | I | G | E | R | | T | | I |
| R | E | P | E | A | L | | L | E | N | T | I | C |
| H | | A | L | L | | D | | B | A | | A | S |
| P | | B | Y | A | N | D | B | | Y | | | N |
| O | S | A | T | | E | | U | R | N | | | O |
| Z | I | N | G | E | R | | T | R | A | G | I | C |
| I | A | | C | O | A | C | H | | I | | I | |
| H | A | G | G | A | I | | A | S | Y | L | U | M |
| C | R | | | R | | N | | A | | | | E |
| S | L | O | G | | P | I | E | | I | M | P | S |

**QUICK**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | D | | N | | E | | A | | S | | S |
| B | E | S | E | T | S | | K | I | N | G | L | Y |
| R | I | G | H | T | A | R | M | | O | U | R | S |
| T | W | E | E | T | | C | H | A | T | T | E | D |
| P | I | E | B | A | L | D | | K | I | O | S | K |
| N | O | E | L | | A | L | L | Q | U | I | E | T |
| S | C | R | A | P | S | | B | L | A | Z | E | S |
| O | M | | U | | L | | O | | F | | B | |

**MENSA PUZZLE**
M. Starting at the bottom left and moving anticlockwise, letters progress through the alphabet in steps of 2, then 3, etc. returning to the beginning of the alphabet whenever Z is reached.

**SUDOKU**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 3 |
| 6 | 5 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 8 | 9 | 1 |
| 7 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| 8 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 4 |
| 2 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 8 |
| 4 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| 9 | 4 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 2 |
| 3 | 6 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| 5 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 7 |

**ALPHA TRIANGLE**
I, Cl, Ice, Lice, E coli, Collie, Collide.

**GO FIGURE**
4 + 4 + 4 + 9 = 21
Easy
5 + 6 – 9 x 7 = 14
Medium
2 + 9 – 2 + 4 = 13
Hard

**LOOP**

**KAKURO**

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**# Split rumours intensify**
Disha Patani unfollowing Suraj Nambiar fuels speculation around Mouni Roy's marriage amid ongoing separation rumours

# Big B finds solace

## Sleepless Amitabh finds comfort in soulful classical music every night

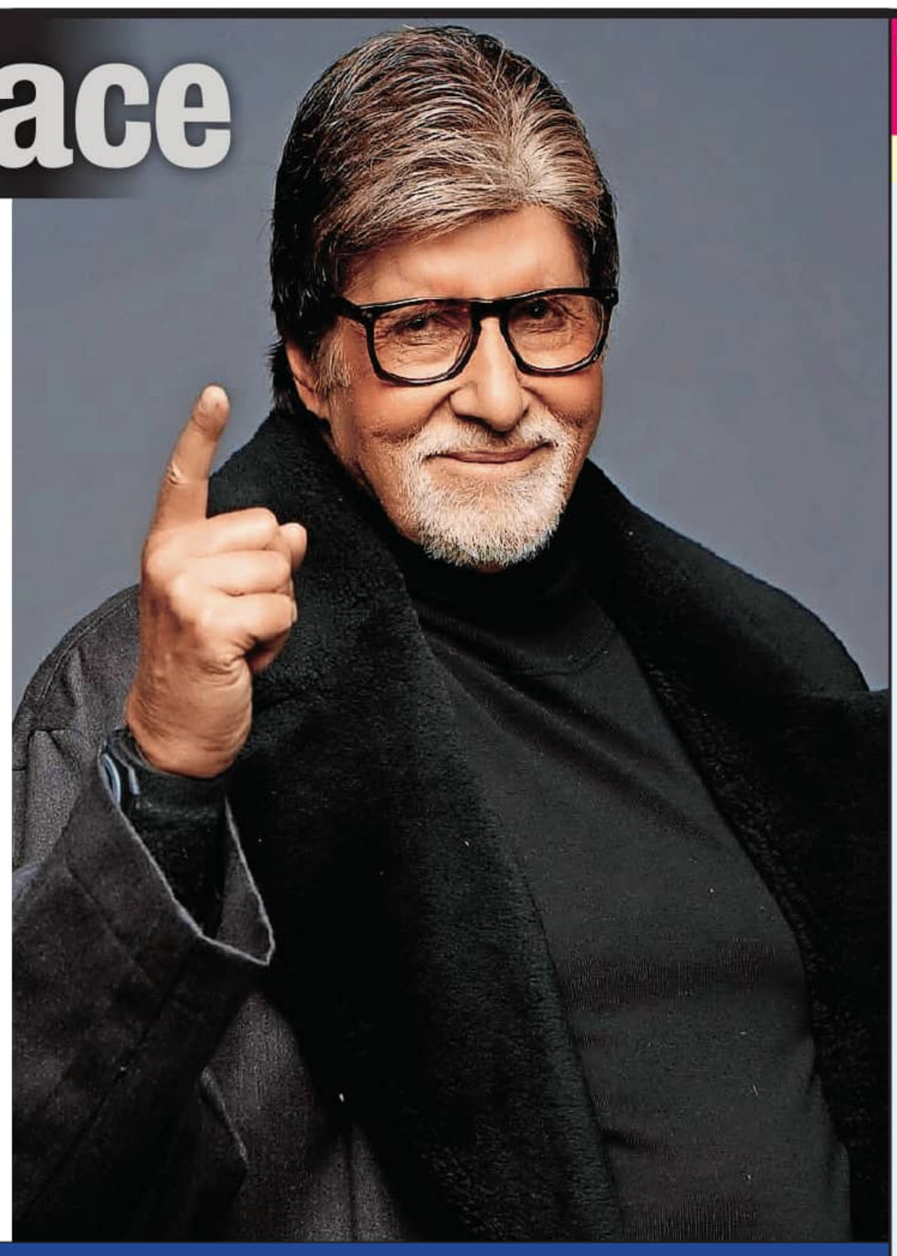
Amitabh Bachchan has shared a deeply personal note about insomnia, demanding work schedules and the soothing effect of music. The veteran actor recently took to his blog to describe how he often remains awake late into the night while continuing to focus on his professional commitments.

In his latest post, Amitabh explained that work frequently takes priority over sleep. He acknowledged that doctors strongly recommend at least seven hours of rest so the body can recover, repair and rejuvenate. However, he admitted that maintaining such a routine is not always possible when responsibilities continue into the early hours. He wrote, "no sleep process takes over at this hour of the morning from the night before.. why because, work is more important than sleep.. medical says its not right.. must get 7 hrs minimum the body grows, develops and repairs in the sleep hours (sic)".

During these quiet hours, Amitabh said he turns to gentle instrumental music for comfort. He described listening to meditative slide guitar and sitar performances that create a calming atmosphere and help him relax. The actor said these soulful classical pieces bring him emotional relief. "So what does one do.. as I work i am glued to the Ef Blog but in the silence of the night that gentle music on slide guitar – sitar rendering some of the most soulful classical meditation solos.. aaah!! there is no better cure for the soul than this (sic)….

He also reflected on the spiritual significance of music, describing it as an invisible thread that connects the soul to the Almighty. According to him, the seven notes that form the basis of music worldwide unite humanity across cultures. "The seven notes that have invaded all music in whichever part of the World, are the Universal commonness of mankind…. respect it and it shall respect you … (sic)".

On the work front, Amitabh Bachchan was last seen in Kalki 2898 AD, where his performance received widespread acclaim. **—ETimes**



## SANDALWOOD SHOTS
Y MAHESWARA REDDY

### Garuda trailer unveiled

Kannada movie Love You was made based on artificial intelligence (AI) last year. While a few more Kannada movies based on AI are in the making, one more movie Garuda is set to join the list of AI-driven movies. The film is expected to arrive in theatres shortly. The movie's trailer was unveiled on Saturday at MMB Legacy.

Kiran S has handled multiple responsibilities, including script, screenplay, direction and cinematography. "The movie Garuda belongs to action, suspense and thriller genres. I made an attempt to make a short film in 2024. The short film became a feature film Garuda. The movie is an anthology of four stories. The protagonist in the movie embarks on a project Garuda," said Kiran.

He said the movie is not based on real incidents. "It is fiction and a non-linear action thriller. The movie is about the hero who embarks on a project. The climax of the movie is whether the hero succeeds in his mission and what are the problems he has to face to reach the target.

## Hayden breaks silence

Hayden Panettiere opened up like never before as she looked back at some of her most painful and traumatic experiences during her budding Hollywood career.

The 'Heroes' actor, during the latest episode of Jay Shetty's podcast, 'On Purpose with Jay Shetty', spoke about a disturbing incident from her upcoming memoir, This Is Me: A Reckoning. In a clip from the podcast that has gone viral, Jay asked Hayden about "a moment in your career where a friend of yours takes you onto a boat. You're led to a room which has an older man in it and then basically told to perform sexual acts."

Recalling the incident, Panettiere said that although she was 18 at the time and believed she could make "healthy decisions" and "safe decisions", she was not "fully aware of what was going on around me." The actor said her "perspective completely shifted" once she realised she was "in danger", adding, "I was quite literally out to sea."

According to Panettiere, the situation was "led by somebody that I had grown to trust and see as a protector and somebody who had my back". **—ETimes**

### Double role debut

The shooting and post-production works of Kannada movie Rudrabhishekam are completed. The movie's team organised an event to launch one of the songs at MMB Legacy on Saturday. Vasant Kumar wrote the script, screenplay and dialogues for the movie apart from directing it. Vijay Raghavendra and Priyanka Thimmesh play the lead pair in the movie. The specialty of the movie is that Vijay Raghavendra played a double role of father and son for the first time in his acting career. K Venkatesh, one of the producers, said the producers of the movie belong to Vijayapura. "I was impressed when my friend Vasant narrated the script. I want to thank Vijay Raghavendra for his cooperation and guidance during the shooting of the movie. He has been gregarious and helpful all these days. Bala Rajwadi played the Gowda character in the movie," he said.

Meanwhile, Vijay Raghavendra said playing a Veeragase artist was quite challenging. "It was tough to play a Veeragase artist but I enjoyed it during the shooting.

## Junaid spills beans on Khans

The three Khans, Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan and Salman Khan, have been ruling Bollywood for over three decades, and no one has matched their level of success and popularity. Their fans have always dreamed of seeing all three together in one film, but for now, the trio is occasionally seen meeting at their homes and spending time together away from the cameras. Recently, Junaid Khan, son of Aamir, was asked how often the three Khans meet each other.

Talking to Vickey Lalwani, Junaid said, "I think the three of them will hang out maybe once a year, once in two years, and have a great time. And I don't think they are interested in hanging out with anybody else when they hang out together. They are very, very sweet, both Shah Rukh Khan sir and Salman Khan sir. And they're both very fond of me." Speaking about Shah Rukh Khan, Junaid Khan recalled a humorous exchange at a part, where the superstar joked about complaining against Aamir Khan. Junaid was last seen in Ek Din opposite Sai Pallavi. **—ETimes**

## Drishyam 3 buzz builds

With excitement building around Mohanlal's upcoming 'Drishyam 3', producers Kumar Mangat Pathak and Abhishek Pathak have now spoken about how Ajay Devgn's Hindi adaptation will differ from the Malayalam original. The makers also discussed their growing involvement in Malayalam cinema and why they believe regional storytelling now has a wider global appeal.

Producer Kumar Mangat Pathak revealed that the team's interest in Malayalam films began during the lockdown. According to him, binge-watching movies from the industry made them realise how unique and content-driven Malayalam cinema had become. Speaking to ANI, he said, "When the lockdown started, we watched a lot of Malayalam films. We realised that the content there is very good. Different types of films are being made and appreciated there."

He said the production house spent nearly one-and-a-half years studying the industry before officially stepping into Malayalam cinema. "After that, our entire team sat together and carried out research for one and a half years. We met people and writers.

Then we planned everything and presented Panorama," Kumar Mangat said. **—ETimes**